

Byrd prods Israel on PLO

WASHINGTON (R) — Senate Democratic leader Robert Byrd urged Israel Saturday to respond positively to the U.S. decision to drop a 13-year ban on contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). "I believe this shift in administration policy is a wise one," the West Virginia, a self-described friend of Israel, said in the Democratic response to President Reagan's weekly radio address. He said the PLO's willingness to meet U.S. conditions should be recognised as "an opportunity to be seized rather than a threat to Israel's security and existence." Byrd, who is stepping down as majority leader to head the Senate Appropriations Committee, expressed fears that hardliners on both sides would do everything to undercut the diplomatic initiative. "But it is my hope that the new government of Israel will see this diplomatic opening as an opportunity to be seized and an opportunity to develop a new national consensus regarding negotiations," with the PLO. "I speak today as a friend of Israel," he added, "a friend is someone who will urge you to do the right thing, even if it is the hard thing to do."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الوائى

Group thanks Sweden

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of Jordanians has sent a message of appreciation and thanks to the Swedish government for its role in and contribution to peace efforts in the Middle East. The message, signed by 10 prominent ex-members of parliament and physicians and addressed to the Swedish ambassador in Jordan, Lars Lomback, said: "We would like to extend to Your Excellency our greatest appreciation for the Swedish government and the Swedish people's stand on behalf of justice and peace in the Middle East showing support and hard effort, to pave the road to peace in the Middle East. We hope Your Excellency would transmit this message of gratitude to the Swedish government and Swedish people for their admirable stand..." The message was signed by Dr. Jamal Shair, Dr. Carlos Dhimis, Dr. Mohammad Najjar, Mr. Jamal Obaidat, Dr. Wajih Barakat, Dr. Mohammad Khalaf, Dr. Mohammad Sabbarini, Dr. Mohammad Ishtieh, Dr. Suhail Khoury, Dr. Ziyad Jamal and Dr. Roger Kayali.

Volume 13 Number 3962

AMMAN SUNDAY DECEMBER 18, 1988, JUMADA AWWAL 8, 1409

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Syria 1 pound; Lebanon 1 pound; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams; Great Britain 25 pence



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, accompanied by Minister of Agriculture Marwan Hmoud, Saturday visits a desert area in the south where anti-locust operations are under way (photo by Yusef Al Altan)

Jordan seeks anti-locust help

By Ziyad Al Shileh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday made an inspection tour of regions invaded by desert locusts in southern Jordan and was briefed on measures taken to combat the threat.

Prince Hassan, accompanied by special teams set to fight off dangerous insects, passed directives on methods to be taken in the operations.

Prince Hassan urged continued coordination among various authorities involved in the locust-fighting task on the one hand and teams themselves on the other.

The Prince paid tribute to the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Armed Forces and the Jordanian Royal Air Force and the badia police who are taking charge of the operations.

Prince Hassan was accompanied on the tour by Agriculture Minister Marwan Hmoud and other officials.

The minister said earlier that

more efforts and speedy action were needed to eradicate the swarms of locusts that are already in Jordan and further swarms that could come from Saudi Arabia, which now abounds with locusts that invaded the country from Africa.

The present operations, the minister said, pave the way for more strenuous efforts to be made to combat more dangerous invasions expected in spring.

He said the Jordan was in need of more equipment and special vehicles to operate in desert terrain, communications equipment, and pesticides. He urged Arab and friendly states and international organisations, including the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation, to extend help to Jordan to assist in its efforts.

So far, the minister noted, said area of 30 square kilometres in southern Jordan is covered with locusts and teams are hard at work to eliminate the pest.

See earlier story on page 3.

Nishanov delivers Gorbachev message to Al Hussein, reaffirms call for peace conference

King praises Soviet stand on Mideast

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday paid tribute to the Soviet Union for its positive stance with regard to Arab issues in general and the Palestine question in particular.

"The wise Soviet leadership is striving hard to find just and equitable solutions for all international problems in light of its 'glasnost and perestroika' strategy," the King said at a meeting with Rafiq Nishanov, a member of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee and party leader of the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan.

At the meeting, held at Al Nadwa Palace, Nishanov conveyed a message to the King from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev dealing with Jordanian-Soviet relations and means of bolstering cooperation.

Nishanov praised the role played by Jordan towards boosting bilateral ties and said that the

Soviet leadership admires the King's leadership and the progress and development achieved by the Kingdom under his reign.

Nishanov said his visit to Jordan coincides with the 25th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral ties, which have been enhanced over the years.

Nishanov underlined the importance of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict at an international peace conference with the participation of all concerned parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Nishanov praised resolutions adopted by the Palestine National Council (PNC) in Algiers in

November and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's speech to the U.N. General Assembly in Geneva. The PNC resolutions and Arafat's speech removed hurdles in the path of the called-for international conference, Nishanov said. Israel, he said, should now take positive reciprocal moves to help achieve peace.

The Iran-Iraq peace negotiations, Nishanov said, should lead to normalised relations between the two sides and urged Jordan to continue its efforts to help the implementation of the Geneva agreements on the Afghanistan issue.

Present at the meeting were Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi, Jordanian-Soviet Friendship Society President Bahjat Talhoumi, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, Court Minister Adnan Abu Odeh, Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker, Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and Soviet Ambassador to Jordan Alexander Zinchuk.

Palestinians begin new 3-day strike; 7 wounded

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip launched a three-day protest strike Saturday to mourn the fatal shooting of five of their brethren a day earlier, and Israeli soldiers wounded at least seven Palestinians in renewed demonstrations and clashes.

Strike was reported in the West Bank towns of Ramallah, Tul-karm, Qalqilya and Hebron, as well as in Arab Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

In Gaza City, Palestinians hurled stones at Israeli troops, and school students abandoned their classes to march with the Palestinian flag, an Arab reporter quoted by the AP said.

Palestinians also clashed with Israeli troops in some of Gaza's refugee camps. In the Nuseirat camp, two teenagers were shot and wounded, hospital officials said. Three others were wounded in the Khan Yunis camp.

In Arab east Jerusalem, school students took to the streets to hurl stones at policemen. Ten of the young protesters were detained during a demonstration near Israeli police headquarters.

On Arab Jerusalem's Saladin Street, the main shopping district, groups of Palestinians were seen sending street vendors home and asking shopkeepers to close to enforce the strike.

In Ramallah, streets were empty except for groups of masked protesters hurling rocks at Israeli troops, Israel radio said.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin, responding to the escalation in violence, accused Palestinians' hardliners of trying to undermine the U.S.-PLO dialogue by protesting in the occupied territories.

Rabin made the comments Friday, one of the bloodiest days of the year-old Palestinian uprising.

In clashes in Nablus, the largest city in the West Bank, Israeli

troops shot and killed four Palestinians. Arab doctors said as many as 32 were wounded elsewhere.

The fifth victim, 20-year-old Mohammad Al Kuni, died overnight of a chest wound at Nablus' Ithad hospital, officials said.

Nablus and the surrounding refugee camps, home to 120,000, were under army-imposed curfew since Friday. A 25-year-old curfew violator who decided to sneak out and visit his neighbour was shot in the leg, hospital officials said. Another Palestinian was wounded in the West Bank's Kafr Abush village.

At least 337 Palestinians have been killed since the uprising began.

Rabin, who opposes the American-PLO dialogue, warned that it may lead to an upsurge in violence by radical Palestinians opposing the move. But, he said, many will tend to abandon protests.

Shamir: U.S.-Israel relations at risk

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Saturday that talks between U.S. officials and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) could endanger Israel's close relationship with Washington.

Interviewed on Israel Radio, Shamir said U.S. talks with the PLO, which started Friday after a break of 13 years, were "grave, painful and difficult."

He added: "We always said the United States and Israel are allies, there is an alliance between us and it can happen that there are serious disagreements between allies... but they don't harm the alliance itself."

"This week something happened that puts that principle to a very serious test. The United States decided to enter negotiations with Israel's most extreme enemy... it's no wonder we are all trying to decide what happened, why it happened and what we should do about it," he said.

It was the first statement from the hardline Likud chief since the United States decided Wednesday to change its policy and end a ban on talks with the PLO.

Shamir also appeared to join other politicians from Israel's left and right who are considering introducing their own peace initiatives in the wake of the U.S. move.

Shamir confirmed earlier reports of his plan to announce a new Middle East initiative after the formation of the new government, but declined to elaborate on the proposal.

"Once the government is formed, one of its first steps... will be initiatives that would be-

come known in Israel and the world," he said.

Shamir stressed that the U.S. step made it imperative to set up a broad-based coalition government that can endorse such initiatives.

Shamir's close aide, cabinet minister Moshe Arens, said Saturday that Israel's next government will discuss a unilateral move to grant Palestinians limited "self-rule," as envisioned in the Camp David accord mediated by the United States in 1978.

The Palestinians reject the "self-rule" idea and would settle only for an independent Palestinian state.

But in Israel, the notion may bridge the gap between Shamir's Likud bloc and the Labour Party led by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

The parties are locked in complex coalition talks since Israel's Nov. 1 general elections. They disagree on peace questions, with Likud opposing "territorial concessions" and Labour favouring a territorial compromise in exchange for peace.

In response to the U.S. decision, Peres and other Labour leaders proposed elections in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and talks with elected Palestinian representatives as a substitute for the PLO. Palestinian notables in the occupied territories reject moves that would exclude the PLO.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Labour's number two man, echoed Peres by saying Friday Israel should counter the U.S. initiative with its own plan

Bhutto faces controversy

ISLAMABAD (R) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) said Saturday the dissolution of the Baluchistan provincial assembly this week was a conspiracy against her two-week-old government.

Shops were shut in several towns of the south-western province of Baluchistan in protest at the dissolution.

Baluchistan Governor Mohammad Musa dissolved the two-week-old provincial assembly Thursday on the advice of controversial provincial Chief Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali, which he had to follow under the constitution.

"The parliamentary party felt that the act of dissolution is a conspiracy against the PPP government to tarnish its image," party spokesman Qazi Abdul Majid Ahid said after a meeting of the group.

Political analysts said the dissolution of the 45-seat assembly almost certainly saved Jamali from losing a vote of confidence in the 45-seat assembly.

Bhutto said Musa dissolved the assembly without consulting her but that his action was constitutional. She also said she would respect provincial autonomy.

But opposition politicians accused her of conspiring to keep an ally in power in the sparsely-populated province which borders Afghanistan and Iran.



His Majesty King Hussein Saturday confers with Rafiq Nishanov, a member of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee who is on a visit to Jordan, in a meeting attended by Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi (right) (Petra photo)

Joint Jordanian-Iraqi Higher Committee meets

Iraqi president, Rifai review bilateral relations

BAGHDAD (Petra) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein received here Saturday Prime Minister Zaid Rifai with whom he reviewed Jordanian-Iraqi relations.

The meeting was attended by Iraqi First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan.

Later, Rifai and Ramadan discussed Jordanian-Iraqi relations and voiced serious desire to enhance cooperation in all fields according to the directives of His Majesty King Hussein and President Hussein. The Iraqi ambassador in Amman and the Jordanian ambassador in Iraq attended the meeting.

Rifai arrived here earlier Saturday at the head of a ministerial delegation for a new round of talks of the Joint Jordanian-Iraqi Higher Committee, which holds meetings twice a year alternately in Amman and Baghdad to discuss bilateral cooperation.

In a statement upon arrival, Rifai said that the meeting would discuss scopes of bilateral cooperation at all levels and in different fields.

In addition, the committee will review all steps implemented to date to carry out the integration process between Jordan and Iraq



Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Saturday receives Prime Minister Zaid Rifai (Petra wirephoto)

and discuss new ideas and proposals for industrial and agricultural cooperation and the work of joint companies, Rifai said.

(Continued on page 2)

PLO counters U.S. contentions, seeks American clarifications

TUNIS (Agencies) — The United States put forward three points for discussion — terrorism, direct negotiations and how the dialogue should proceed — at its opening session of talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), a PLO official said Saturday.

The PLO countered on the first two points and sought clarifications of U.S. policy on these and other questions, the official told Reuters in a detailed briefing on Friday's 90-minute session.

He said U.S. Ambassador Robert Pelletreau Washington hoped the PLO would exclude "terrorist" elements and that, whenever "terrorist" attacks took place, it would condemn them.

Pelletreau did not mention any names or incidents, the official said.

The PLO team, led by Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo, responded by

saying its definition of "terrorism" did not include attacks on military targets inside Israel or the one-year-old civilian uprising in the occupied territories.

The PLO said it felt it was not up to Israel or the United States alone to say who was responsible for future acts of "terrorism." It said Israel might try attacks on civilians in Europe, for example, to sabotage the PLO-American talks.

The two U.S. negotiators took note of the PLO position and noted that they accepted it, the PLO official said.

The PLO then raised specifically the killing of PLO military commander Khalil Al Wazir in April, less than five kilometres from the site of the meeting, and the killing of four Palestinians in Nablus Friday.

It said these were examples of Israeli state terrorism and asked Washington to clarify its position on such acts.

On the second point, the United States repeated its position that it thought direct negotiation between Israel and other parties to the Middle East conflict was the best framework for a settlement.

The PLO answered that it opposed bilateral solutions because the State of Palestine would need international guarantees of security and because Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and other parties were also affected.

It said the Palestinians were willing to talk to Israeli groups, as they had done on many occasions, but the Israelis tried to prevent contacts through their law banning meetings between Israelis and the PLO.

The PLO then sought to elicit clear U.S. positions on an international conference, the right of Palestinian refugees to return or receive compensation and U.N. Resolution 181, the official said.

The PLO took the 1947 resolution as the legal basis of the State of Palestine which it proclaimed in

(Continued on page 2)

Red Cross urges end to flow of aid workers, equipment to Armenia

YEREVAN (Agencies) — A Red Cross official urged Western relief groups Saturday to stop sending workers and equipment to earthquake-stricken Armenia as hope diminished of finding survivors.

Soviet media reported fresh instances of inadequate rescue work 10 days after the earthquake which officials said killed 55,000 people and left half a million homeless. More than 40,000 people have been evacuated.

Newspapers also had detailed descriptions of looting and other crime and new warnings were issued about extremists in Armenia's territorial dispute with neighbouring Azerbaijan.

George Reed, a spokesman for the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said vehicles and equipment were clogging rutted roads in the devastated region near the Turkish border.

He said a Red Cross team touring the area would recom-

meed which equipment was needed as initial rescue work ended and preparations began to raze wrecked buildings.

"No more emergency help should be coming in," he told Reuters. "New groups will only be contributing to a second disaster."

A Soviet Red Cross official, Dmitry Venediktov, said Friday that no more foreign relief teams were required. The TASS news agency quoted him as saying that specialised equipment like artificial kidney machines was still needed.

But Reed said relief workers were also being overwhelmed by medical equipment. "We have too many doctors and too many kidney machines," he said, adding that some dialysis machines would be redeployed elsewhere in the country.

Another rescue official said two recent plane loads of medical equipment had been surplus to requirements.

Soviet television reported Friday that 21 people had been found alive in the preceding 24 hours in the city of Leninakan and in Spitak, a town of 20,000 obliterated by the tremor.

But non-military officials were being told to leave Spitak and bulldozing was already beginning in areas thoroughly checked for bodies.

Reed said the quake showed an international coordination centre was vital to send aid quickly to any disaster area.

Asked about cooperation with Soviet authorities, he said: "At the top they have been excellent, but we have had problems with the middle management."

Soviet leaders and the press have said the rescue operation was slow, lacked direction and failed to use equipment efficiently.

Television news Friday showed Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai

(Continued on page 2)

AROUND THE WORLD...

Papandreou threatens to resign

ATHENS (AP) — Premier Andreas Papandreou declared Saturday that he would resign from office if parliament did not approve his budget for 1989 as a financial scandal continued to rock the socialist administration. Speaking on nationwide television, the 69-year-old premier said he would consider a rejection of his 4,052 trillion drachmas budget (\$27.9 billion) a vote of no confidence in his government that would force him to step down.

Bomb explodes in west Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — A small bomb exploded at the entrance to an apartment building in west Beirut Saturday. Police said a nine-year-old girl was wounded. Minutes later, police sapper Bashir Idris dismantled a bigger bomb shortly before the time it was set to explode in the same densely-populated neighbourhood of Tarik Jadideh, a police statement said.

Filipino rebels dismiss autonomy plan

CAIRO (R) — Muslims seeking self-rule in the southern Philippines said Saturday that President Corason Aquino's proposal to grant limited autonomy to Muslim areas of the country was a propaganda ploy. "This is another empty gesture, if not a brazen ploy and propaganda deception," the leader of the rebel Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Nur Misuari, said in a statement.

Angola Namibia pact boosts ANC

LUSAKA (R) — African National Congress (ANC) President Oliver Tambo said Saturday that recent peace moves on Angola and Namibia would boost his liberation movement's struggle to end apartheid in South Africa. "The welcome developments... in our region have initiated a trend that will not leave our country untouched. The momentum that will yield independence for Namibia will be carried forward to our struggle and the achievement of our independence," Tambo said. He said the South African government was now fumbling in the dark, unsure about the future. The ANC president led hundreds of mourners at the funeral of ANC executive member Johnstone Makatini who died in Lusaka Dec. 3 after an illness.

Sultan Qaboos sees risk of renewed war

Oman urges GCC ties with Tehran, Moscow

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Sultan Qaboos Ibn Sai'd of Oman in remarks published Saturday urged members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to improve ties with the Soviet Union and Iran.

His call to members of the six-member council appeared in the Kuwaiti daily Al-Siyassah two days before a GCC summit convenes in Bahrain.

The Omani leader said there was still a risk that fighting between Iran and Iraq could resume and it was important for the two sides to move to a state of complete peace.

"Officially the war has ended, and we are happy for this. But until a peace agreement is signed, and Security Council Resolution 598 is implemented, dangers of a renewal of the war remain," he said.

Iran and Iraq ended eight years of fighting in August, but have made little progress since then in implementing U.N. Resolution 598 which also calls for a troop withdrawal and exchange of prisoners.

The GCC — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates — generally backed Baghdad in the conflict and relations with Tehran suffered as a result.

Saudi Arabia cut ties with Iran last April, accusing it of hostile acts.

"The important thing is that the peace between Iraq and Iran move from a stage of ceasefire to that of complete peace. As the GCC we must move after this towards relations with Iran in order to lessen tension in the



Sultan Qaboos Ibn Sai'd

region," Sultan Qaboos said. He said relations with Moscow had become necessary for the GCC policies.

"I think diplomatic relations with it (Moscow) and with the rest of the GCC states, must take place because we need this important state... the Soviet Union is today not what it was in past years," he added.

Kuwait established diplomatic ties with Moscow in the 1960s, Oman and the United Arab Emirates followed in 1985 and Qatar this year. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have yet to do so.

Sultan Qaboos' suggestion for the normalisation of relations followed a recent meeting he had

with King Fahd in Saudi Arabia.

The GCC leaders are meeting Monday in Bahrain for their annual summit, whose agenda includes consideration of steps to assist the Iran-Iraq peace process.

He said Oman maintained relations with Iran and made an effort not to enter into a confrontation with it during the conflict "believing that by maintaining good relations we could contribute toward stopping the war."

"We succeeded," he added. He added that an Iraqi envoy was in Muscat recently with a message from Baghdad to dispel rumours that Iraq might become a threat to the countries in the region.

"I consider this reply dispels all such fears," the sultan said. "We do not harbour any fears now and believe Iraq's victory is our victory." Iraq's strength "is the strength of the entire Arab World," he added.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Ibn Mubarak Al Khalifa was quoted as saying that the GCC's future dealings with Iran "will be on a collective and not a bilateral basis."

"We want to have the best relations with Iran," he added in an interview with the UAE daily Al-Khaleej. "We do not have special demands, nor are we interested in imposing conditions for cooperation with Iran," he said.

"Our aim is to clear the air and remove all obstacles and the causes of the bad developments of the recent past," Sheikh Mohammad said.



FIGHTING BACK — A Palestinian woman grabs the truncheon of a charging mounted Israeli policeman during a demonstration in occupied Jerusalem earlier this week as in the one-year-old Palestinian uprising against Israel's occupation of the Holy City, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Sweden mediated release of ICRC delegate in Lebanon

BERNE (Agencies) — Sweden mediated in bringing about the release of Swiss hostage Peter Winkler, freed Friday night after four weeks' captivity in Lebanon, Swiss Foreign Minister Rene Felber said Saturday.

Felber told a news conference that the Swedish ambassador in Damascus worked for the release of Winkler, a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Switzerland did not give in to any of the conditions of his kidnappers, he said.

Felber said Winkler was to fly home Sunday aboard a Zurich-bound Cyprus Airlines jetliner.

Asked in Beirut about Winkler's plans after his release, ICRC spokeswoman Francoise Derron told the AP: "All I can say now is that (Winkler) is still with the Swiss ambassador and on his way to Switzerland." She refused to elaborate.

Winkler, 32, was kidnapped Nov. 17 near the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain Al Hilweh by gunmen loyal to the radical Palestinian Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) led by Abu Nidal.

The precise role of the Swedish ambassador since that time and what demands the kidnappers might have made were not immediately clear.

But Palestinian and Lebanese security sources in Beirut said Winkler was later handed over to radicals demanding the release of Lebanese Mohammad Hussein Hariri.

Hariri is being held in prison in Switzerland charged with hijacking an Air Afrique plane last year on a flight from Rome to Paris and forcing it to land in Geneva.

His trial was scheduled for November but was postponed until February to allow psychiatrists to examine him further.

"The ICRC would like to

thank in particular the Swiss authorities and the Swedish ambassador to Damascus, who played an essential role in his release," it said in a statement.

"The successful outcome can only facilitate the humanitarian mission of the ICRC in Lebanon."

A spokeswoman said the ICRC hoped to resume operations in Sidon, but after Winkler's kidnapping there — but it would seek assurances that its delegates can again work in safety.

"It is very, very important that we get a guarantee to be able to work freely and safely. This same incident must not happen again," she said.

Sweden, respected by most parties in the Middle East as a disinterested mediator, has played an increasingly active diplomatic role in the area in the past year.

Amal rescues 3 Irish troopers

TYRE, Lebanon (AP) — The mainstream Shi'ite Amal militia Saturday rescued three Irish soldiers serving with the U.N. peacekeeping force in South Lebanon after day in the hands of pro-Iranian fighters, police said.

A police spokesman said Amal also captured about 100 members of the Faithful Resistance, the fanatic faction which was behind the abduction Friday of the three Irish soldiers.

He said the three were rescued from a house in the village of Sultaniyeh, 1.6 kilometres south-west of Tibnin, the headquarters of the 620-strong Irish battalion serving with the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

UNIFIL spokesman Timur Goksel said Amal returned the three to their command at 11 a.m. (0900 GMT).

"They are in good shape and back with their unit in Tibnin," Goksel told the AP by telephone. Tibnin, from which the three

were snatched Friday, is 25 kilometres north of the Israeli border.

The rescue operation, according to the police spokesman, was completed at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) when 15 Faithful Resistance guerrillas "surrendered to Amal and set free the three Irish soldiers."

The Faithful Resistance is a small group of Shi'ite fundamentalists affiliated with the Iranian-backed Hizbollah.

"The fighters surrendered after Amal militiamen, in a smart and quiet move, arrested the Faithful Resistance's seven commanders in the whole region," the spokesman said.

"The fighters surrendered because they didn't know what to do after Amal arrested their commanders. They surrendered peacefully," the spokesman said.

"Amal carried out the whole operation peacefully. It summoned the Faithful Resistance's commanders individually to a meeting to discuss the release of

the Irish soldiers.

"However, the seven were captured by Amal when they refused to release the Irish soldiers unconditionally. Their followers gave in a while later," the spokesman added.

In addition to the 22 guerrillas involved directly in the abduction of the Irishmen, Amal rounded up about 80 Faithful Resistance members in South Lebanon overnight, the spokesman said.

UNIFIL's 5,800 troops "blocked all roads in the force's area of operations to prevent the kidnappers from smuggling out the three Irish soldiers," the spokesman said.

The Faithful Resistance kidnapped the three Irish soldiers to trade them for Jawad Kasfi, a colleague held by Israel, according to police.

Two Israeli soldiers and three allied militiamen of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) drove into Tibnin in civilian cars Thursday and grabbed Kasfi.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq's army in reconstruction effort

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's army will help in the reconstruction and rehabilitation effort in a major city, the army daily said Saturday. Al-Qadissya said the Fourth Army Corps will take part in the reconstruction and development of the city of Imara, 300 kilometres south of Baghdad, together with civilian authorities. The army newspaper quoted local Governor Tayah Abdul-Jarim as saying that President Saddam Hussein instructed government ministries to take part in the redevelopment of the city which is the provincial capital of the governorate of Meisan. The paper said half of the redevelopment effort will be done by the Fourth Corps units which defended the province during the eight-year war with Iran. This is the first time Iraq has announced that army units will take part in the post-war reconstruction effort. Reports have circulated that the army might also become involved in the reconstruction of both southern cities of Fao and Basra, both heavily damaged in the war.

Turkey: No radiation in quake zone

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish scientists said Saturday they had measured no unusual radiation from a Soviet nuclear power station near the zone hit by the devastating earthquake in Soviet Armenia Dec. 7. "The reactor is about two kilometres from the Turkish border... no radioactive leakage was registered in the air, water or earth," scientist Bayrak Tutan said. Tutan was speaking to Anatolian news agency after a two-day inspection of the border area by Erzurum University experts. Four Turks died and 1,500 Turkish houses were damaged in the earthquake, which killed at least 55,000 people on the other side of the border.

Velayati: No arms purchased from China

PEKING (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati denied Saturday that China had sold arms to Tehran but predicted a major role for Peking in his country's post-war reconstruction. "China hasn't sold weapons to us and we haven't purchased weapons from them," he told reporters. He claimed that any Chinese weapons in Iran's armed forces had been captured from Iraq. China has remained officially neutral in the war but has been accused of supplying "Silkworm" missiles to Iran. The United States last year halted briefly a relaxation of curbs on high technology sales to China, alleging that Peking had sold missiles to Iran. China has been eager to take advantage of a four-month ceasefire to help Iran rebuild its shattered economy.

Drug suspect not related to Elias Sarkis

NEW YORK (AP) — A man arrested at Kennedy international airport on heroin smuggling charges is not related to the late Lebanese President Elias Sarkis, the Lebanese ambassador to the United States said Friday. Gebrayel Sarkis, 70, was arrested Thursday by agents of the U.S. customs service following a flight from Geneva, said Ann Driscoll, a spokeswoman for U.S. attorney Andrew Maloney. Driscoll said Sarkis told authorities he was a brother of Elias Sarkis, the president of Lebanon from 1976 to 1982. "He is not at all related to the former and late president," said Abdullah Bouhabib, the ambassador. "Sarkis is like Jones or Smith in this country. He's not the brother, not even a cousin. He is no relation at all," the ambassador said in a telephone interview.

Greece holds man wanted in Turkey

ATHENS (AP) — A Turk wanted in his country for allegedly dealing in drugs, illegal arms trading and fraud totalling \$55-million, has been arrested at an Athens suburb, a police official said Saturday. The official said Turan Cevik, 39, was arrested Dec. 2 at the Hotel Emmatina in the seaside suburb of Glyfada. Cevik, for possessing small quantities of narcotics. Another Turk, Metin Davut Koray, 29, and a Greek woman Andromachi Apostolidou, 27, were also arrested with Cevik and charged with possessing drugs, police said. Police searched their hotel room acting on information that Cevik was trafficking in narcotics in Greece. A body search disclosed that Cevik had half a gramme of cocaine on him and Koray was in possession of four grammes of cocaine. Apostolidou was found in possession of a small amount of cocaine which was given to her by Koray, the police official said. The Turks and the Greek woman will be held in custody until their trial.

Rebels reject Tehran's explanation

NICOSIA (R) — The main Iranian opposition group described Iran's interior minister Saturday as a liar for saying a former cabinet minister was killed by a man who later committed suicide. The Mujahadeen-e-Khalq said Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi himself planned the knife attack on former Health Minister Kazem Sami, who died of his wounds Nov. 25. Mohtashemi said Friday that former Red Crescent worker Mahmoud Jaliliyan killed himself in a bath at Ahvaz, 450 kilometres southwest of Tehran, 32 hours after killing Sami at this Tehran clinic. In a statement telecast to Cyprus, the Mujahadeen said Mohtashemi's explanation was absurd and fabricated because the description of Jaliliyan did not correspond with the description of the killer given by Sami's wife and other eyewitnesses. Mohtashemi's claim that Jaliliyan killed Sami was "a humiliating departure" from earlier Iranian reports blaming the Mujahadeen for the killing, it said.

U.S. voices concern over Soviet attacks

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States said Friday it was very concerned about Soviet military attacks in Afghanistan, charging that Moscow had broken a promise to exercise restraint. But State Department spokesman Charles Redman said Washington still believed Moscow would meet its commitment to remove all its 100,000 to 115,000 troops from Afghanistan by Feb. 15. "We have some very strong concerns about what continues to be a very intense pattern of Soviet offensive activity. It has gone on essentially uninterrupted since about the period of Halloween (Oct. 31)," Redman said at a news briefing. "It has continued this week I think on most days with more than 100 sorties and we feel very strongly that this is not what needs to be done in Afghanistan. This violates a Soviet undertaking made to us at the Washington summit (in December 1987). Redman said many of the attacks were carried out by backfire bombers based in the Soviet Union and that most air strikes were in support of Soviet-backed Afghan army troops.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Jordanian-Iraqi meetings open

(Continued from page 1)

Rifai, who co-chairs the committee meeting with Ramadan, is accompanied on the visit to Baghdad by the ministers of transport and telecommunication, industry and trade, energy and mineral resources and finance, the minister of state for cabinet affairs, the governor of the Central Bank of Jordan, the Royal Jordanian chairman and chief executive officer and the prime minister's

office director.

Trade talks open

Soon after Rifai's arrival here, a joint Jordanian-Iraqi ministerial committee co-chaired by Minister of Industry and Trade Hamdi Tabbaa and Iraqi Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Mohammad Hamzeh held a meeting to discuss expanding the volume of trade between the two countries and to look into measures to enhance cooperation in

industrial, financial, agricultural fields and look into prospects of linking the national grids of the two countries.

The meeting discussed the prospect of launching cooperation in contracting businesses and linking Iraq and Jordan with a railway to boost transportation.

Other meetings were held by Jordanian and Iraqi ministers, and the decisions will be referred to the higher committee meeting for endorsement.

PLO counters contentions

(Continued from page 1)

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat described Friday's meeting as a "step in the right direction" towards a "just and comprehensive settlement."

"No peace can be settled without their (U.S.) participation and their efforts," he said at a brief news conference at a PLO office here.

Arafat said the PLO's main priority in the talks is to push for an early convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

Arafat also accused Israel of trying to sabotage the new dialogue by killing four Palestinians in the West Bank.

"It is a message from the Israeli military junta, from Israeli leaders, who are still refusing to accept peace, a just peace for a settlement... it is sabotage (of the PLO-American talks)," he said.

Israeli troops shot dead the four Palestinians and wounded at least 20 during clashes in the West Bank Friday.

Asked if he wanted to take part in the dialogue personally, Arafat said: "It is not a matter of level. We know that America is one of the superpowers, and no peace can be set without their participation and their efforts. It is obvious."

In an apparent reference to some hardline Palestinian factions that oppose his strategies, the PLO leader said he could not guarantee that "one person here or one individual there" might resort to terrorism.

"Give me one example of any ruler who can have complete control with all the groups," he said.

PLO spokesman Ahmad Abdul Rahman said the next round of talks would be held sometime after President-elect George Bush takes office Jan. 20.

He said at the next sessions the PLO would seek a "common understanding" with the Americans on the issues of an international conference, Palestinian statehood and withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories.

"We will not have results or solutions in one day," Abdul Rahman said. "It's not like a knockout in boxing. We must go point by point."

"The result will be a Palestinian

state," he said. "There is no other option."

Meanwhile, U.S. embassies have gone on a worldwide security alert as a precaution against possible attacks by hardline groups opposed to U.S. contacts with the PLO. State Department officials said Saturday.

The officials told Reuters in Washington that instructions for the alert were sent to embassies in a classified cable after Secretary of State George Shultz announced Wednesday the end of a 13-year ban on contacts with the PLO.

Describing the cable as a routine precaution, one official said it was "logical to be concerned" about splinter groups.

Armenia

(Continued from page 1)

Ryzhkov angrily accusing the Foreign Ministry of letting down foreign aid workers.

The newspaper Selskaya Zhizn (Rural Life) said the village of Dzhabdzu had received no help for six days — and then only after Ryzhkov had met residents pleading for bread and coffins.

True reported that 40 criminal cases had been opened against looters and said criminal "gangs" had converged on the areas from other parts of the country.

The army newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda said one man had been arrested after offering to divide loot with a soldier if he helped him break in to the savings bank he was guarding.

Some crane operators, it said, were trying to extort money from residents whose relatives were missing under rubble.

The paper said that in one devastated village local "nouveaux riches" had intercepted stoves the army was distributing and were selling them at a tidy profit.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:50 Programme review
16:00 Children programmes
17:05 Football match
18:00 News summary in Arabic
18:05 Local programme
18:45 Children programme
19:40 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Local programme
22:20 Documentary programme
23:00 News summary in Arabic
23:10 Programme contd.

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Le Monde est a vous
18:30 L'ecole des Fars
19:00 News in French
19:15 Sauvage et Beau
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Varieties programme

20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Only When I Laugh
21:00 Documentary: "The Silk Road"
22:00 News in English
22:20 The Inside

PRAYER TIMES

05:03 Fajr
06:25 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:32 Dhuhr
14:16 'Asr
16:39 Maghreb
18:02 'Isha

CHURCHES

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624980.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terrasanta Church Tel. 623666.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 625383. Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
Rainbow Congregation Tel. 822605.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817. 821264

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be relatively cold and partly cloudy. Rain is expected to fall in the northern part of the Kingdom and later spread to other areas early in the day. A cold air mass is expected to cross the Kingdom in the afternoon causing a drop in temperature and heavy rain.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 4/10
Aqaba 10/20
Deserts 2/12
Jordan Valley 9/19

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 42 per cent. Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Al Abbadi 778959
Dr. Ahmad Al Daqni 676453
Dr. Mousa Bashir 615487
Dr. Khaleel N'addi 743500
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636739
Ya'qub pharmacy 649445
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

IRRD:
Dr. Mohammad Al Da'ani (—)
Al Sharas pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Mufid Safrah (—)
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Directorate 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 198, 891228
Blood Bank 778303
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 639141
Public Security Directorate 656000 / 685111
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897487

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone information (directory assistance) 12
Oreocan Calls 17
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdall Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 731111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 648411, 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-52200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-52200

Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Munasser Hospital 6672779
The Islamic, Abdall 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdall 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajiroun 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511226
Army, Marika 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Company (09)963323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Ilu Sina Hospital (09)966732
IBRD:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)27275
Hn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khilidi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Aklich Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 6641714

Apple 500 / 400
Banana 350 / 300
Banana (Mukammal) 300 / 250
Beet 430 / 420
Cabbage 130 / 100
Carrots 280 / 200
Cauliflower 160 / 120
Cucumbers 280 / 200
Eggplant 500 / 300
Eggplant (small) 90 / 50
Garlic 200 / 150
Grapefruit 160 / 120

Lemon 200 / 160
Marrow (large) 80 / 50
Marrow (small) 140 / 80
Orange (French) 380 / 250
Orange (Shamouni) 360 / 250
Onion (dry) 230 / 200
Onion (wet) 200 / 160
Pepper (hot) 300 / 240
Pepper (sweet) 300 / 240
Potato 250 / 180
Spinach 130 / 100
Mandarin 200 / 180
Tomatoes 280 / 220

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.

First eight biggest prizes are issued from GUVS headquarters.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

جوردين تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department.

Peace picks momentum

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein has foresightedly projected upon his return from his official visit to France and working visit to Egypt that efforts would soon be launched for convening an international peace conference on the Middle East. Last week in an interview with Kuwaiti Al Siyassah daily newspaper, the King expressed optimism that next spring would witness a tangible movement in the peace process. The United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted last Thursday for convening such a conference. Meanwhile both the Soviet Union and France are calling for a meeting of the five permanent members of the Security Council to prepare the ground work for the international conference. All in all the momentum for holding such a conference after the new Bush administration assumes power in Washington is certainly picking up and would seem probable now that by next spring such a conference would be held.

The Israeli establishment would most likely fight tooth and nail this momentum for peace in the Middle East. However, the tidal wave for peace in the region is getting so forceful that it is unlikely that the Israeli government would succeed in derailing it now. With the U.S. decision to respond favourably to the recent PLO peace overtures and the whole international community standing solidly behind the real breakthrough in the quest for peace in the Middle East, the momentum for peace appears now to be unstoppable.

What lends support to optimism is the proposition that the Jewish community is now divided about how to react to the new Palestinian offers for peace on the terms long advocated and insisted upon by Israel and the U.S. The meeting between Chairman Yasser Arafat and U.S. Jewish leaders in Stockholm last week has demonstrated that there is a deep crack in the Jewish and Israeli postures on the PLO's offers for peace. The Stockholm rendezvous, which was brokered by the Swedish government, has ushered the beginning of a new phase in the peace process. If this cleavage within the Jewish and Israeli communities could develop in favour of the anticipated Arab-Israeli dialogue and negotiations within the framework of an international peace conference, the projection in support of convening an international conference will prove to be true and well based.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

SINCE the moment Washington announced that it was opening a dialogue with the PLO, developments in the Middle East region moved fast, calling for preparedness and unity on the part of the Arabs and speedy action on the part of the world community. Al Ra'i Arabic daily said in an editorial, Saturday. The paper referred in particular to Israel's escalation of repressive actions in the occupied territories which Friday led to the death of five Arab youths and the injury of 150 others, and said the new crime was committed as the PLO and the U.S. were embarking on a dialogue that could pave the way for a lasting settlement. Not only was Israel displaying its desire to stifle the resistance by force, but its Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was also announcing plans to hold elections in the occupied lands in a bid to find a substitute leadership for the Palestinians who can talk separately with Israel and so avoid the proposed international peace conference, the paper noted.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily cast doubts on U.S. intentions, describing the announcement about a dialogue with the PLO as a tactical move. Tareq Masarweh says that as long as the Americans are holding on to the idea that the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip should be determined in the coming negotiations, it means that it does not approve of the Palestinians having the right to determine their own future and that all parties to the conflict will decide on their future. We have to examine Washington's words very carefully since we do not believe that the Americans want to free themselves from the influence of their Israeli allies, the writer cautions. He says that the U.S. could back Israel's idea of elections in the occupied Arab land and, therefore, the Palestinians should be vigilant and ready to carry on the uprising and maintain their unity of ranks if they wish to attain their national goals.

Al Dustour daily said the U.S. announcement about a dialogue with the PLO has been widely welcomed in the Arab World. If this dialogue is serious and continuous, with diligence and perseverance, then it might lead to the convening of an international conference that would lay the foundation for a just and lasting peace, said the paper. The Americans should realise, as King Hussein has said, that the Arabs are united behind their Palestinian brothers, extending to them all support for their endeavours to regain freedom, and that the Arab states back the efforts of the Palestine Liberation Organisation to help achieve that goal, the paper continued. King Hussein said in an interview with the CBS television network that he was deeply satisfied with the American announcement to have a dialogue with the PLO because it paves the way for a solution of a chronic issue that endangered world peace. The King's satisfaction, the paper noted, stems from the fact that Jordan along with Egypt have paved the way for the American step through their relentless efforts which have now been crowned with success.

Sawt Al Shaab for its part dwelt on the King's interview with the CBS network as throwing more light on the Palestine question and the need for the Americans to realise that the Palestinians are oriented towards peace based on justice. The King said that the Arab World as a whole supports the Palestinians and their stance in their quest for peace through an international peace conference, and therefore Washington should respond favourably and pursue the dialogue with the representatives of the Palestinian people until justice is re-established, the paper noted. It said that Jordan's efforts in support of the Palestinian people should be interpreted in the light of the brotherly links between Jordan and Palestine and the long joint endeavours to restore the rights of the people of Palestine in their homeland.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Economic challenges: past, present, future

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

ONE of the most prominent features of the Jordanian economy is its flexibility, and its ability to be moved, changed, and reconstructed in response to official decisions, measures, policies and related private expectations.

Flexibility is of course an advantage, but it places more responsibility on the shoulders of the administration of the national economy. Those in charge could not afford to wait until the crisis happens, problems grow, and fires erupt in one economic sector or another. The leadership or management is required to be far-sighted, able to foresee the future, to read the indicators and clues, and act ahead of time before the crisis and problems that ensue grow out of control.

The past financial abundance allowed a lot of negligence, and over optimism, future expectations were too high to warrant any worry about the present. However, the current financial crunch must change our perceptions towards the style of management of the national economy and public finance. In a way these affairs should be run, from now on, like a business. A private business would not allow looseness in getting all its rights, or relaxation in waste and rising costs.

The number one economic and social challenge that Jordan faced in the last six years was the challenge of unemployment. No

doubt, unemployment caused worry and attracted attention, but unfortunately no practical plan was ever formulated to deal with this challenge, and no definite measures, policies or options were brought forward or implemented to deal with the roots of the problem and the continued generation of more unemployment at the rate of 2.5 per cent a year since 1982.

The latest challenge was the monetary crisis. The current overriding goal is of course the restoration of stability at the present realistic exchange rate, which has been holding for three weeks so far, and can be a basis for a new born certainty. Certainty is needed to have private investments resume without further delay.

The coming challenge is to bring the central government's budget deficit under control, and face up to the heavy burden of the external debt service and overcome the balance of payments difficulties. This challenge calls for urgent planning and calculations.

Priority of course should be afforded to overall security and stability. However, it is equally important that the adjustment process be accompanied by a measure of real growth in production and national exports.

Real economic growth in the private sector is needed to

alleviate unemployment, create jobs, secure higher domestic revenues for the treasury, reduce the deficit in the balance of payments, and for the augmentation of the capacity of the country to service its external debt. Economic growth should remain dependent on resources borrowed by the public sector. The private sector should finally take up its role as the new engine for growth and investments, after the outlook has been cleared to a certain extent.

We need a completely new development strategy, to help Jordan open up to the Arab region and the world at large. To make our exports of goods and services more competitive and able to penetrate new markets. To make the private sector more dynamic and aggressive, and to have the government provide the incentives, atmosphere and suitable conditions.

The recent developmental meetings, sponsored and led by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to help in starting a serious, national dialogue around the future tasks of the coming stage. The free dialogue is needed to evaluate the past directions, and forge new ones for the immediate future.

We have to overcome the difficulties, and continue the march on new basis, with wider participation. There is no more place for mismanagement and negligence.

On Friday in Tunis, the U.S. government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation had the first contact after a break of 13 years. The following two articles shed light on behind-the-scenes diplomacy that led to the breakthrough

U.S.-PLO dialogue boosting peace prospects

By Christopher Hanson
Reuters

WASHINGTON — By opening a dialogue with the PLO, Washington has returned to centre stage in the Middle East peace process and may ultimately help pave the way for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Middle East experts say. They say Washington's historic move has boosted the standing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and increased pressure on Israel to be more conciliatory, even though a big shift by the Jewish state may be a long way off.

"This is a small step on what's going to be a very long... and rocky road to peace in the Middle East. But we think this is an important step that will advance the cause," Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy told reporters.

The United States has been pressing for a solution under which Israel would exchange lands occupied in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war for security guarantees.

Middle East expert Joseph Sisco, a former assistant secretary of state for the Near East, told Reuters: "The most important thing is that (the decision) restores the centrality of the United States in the peace process."

Washington had played a central Middle East role in the 1960s and 70s, culminating in the 1978 Camp David Israel-Egypt peace accord. But under President Reagan, America had paid less attention to what seemed an intractable conflict.

Reagan announced Wednesday the PLO had met its three criteria to resume a dialogue: PLO Chair-

man Yasser Arafat had renounced terrorism, explicitly recognised Israel's right to exist and endorsed U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 urging respect for the territorial integrity of all nations in the area.

Isolating Israel

Among other things, Washington could seek even stronger assurances that the PLO leadership would not back "terrorist" actions against Israel.

The very word indicates the scale of the problem. Israel labels terrorist virtually anyone that opposes it by violent means — from aeroplane hijackers to a youth who throws a stone to protest at the military occupation of the West Bank. But Israel's "terrorists" often are the landless Palestinians' freedom fighters — and the rest of the world's views fall somewhere in between.

Another key issue in the talks could be the Arab uprising on the West Bank, which Sisco said the PLO must hold in check if the peace process is to move ahead. He said peace prospects would also be enhanced if Arab governments would state explicitly and often that they were willing to coexist with Israel.

With Washington talking with the PLO and maintaining close ties with Israel, the United States could ultimately bring the two sides to the negotiating table, according to Sisco.

"We can be the broker, carefully prodding, making suggestions," he said.

In the 13 years it had ruled out direct contacts with the PLO, branding it terrorist, Washington was hard-pressed to play the broker role effectively between

Israel and the Palestinian people. Now communication will be easier.

"The demonisation of the PLO as the incarnation of terror and evil will subside and the PLO will be seen more as a normal political actor," said Middle East special-

ist William Quandt of the Private Brookings Institution.

Analysts said Washington's move had isolated Israel, which expressed dismay at the decision and repeated its vow never to negotiate with the PLO, even as many countries warmly praised the U.S. decision.

Sisco said it was important now for Washington to reassure Israel that it was still a firm friend so that it could play a mediating role in the years ahead. U.S. leaders have tried vigorously to do so.

"We have made it very clear that we have not retreated one

inch from the position of guaranteeing the safety of Israel," President Reagan told reporters Thursday.

Reagan said if the PLO failed to match its conciliatory words with performance, "we're back where we started."

Secret meetings led to U.S. decision

By G.G. Labelle
The Associated Press

GENEVA — For Sten Andersson, the announcement on the television in a Geneva hotel suite brought an end to months of secret meetings, contacts with Arabs and Jews, and quibbling over words in two languages.

Andersson, Sweden's foreign minister, guided the diplomacy leading to the United States' agreement to talk to the PLO, and he smiled broadly as he heard U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz make the announcement.

The Swedish effort to bring together the United States and the PLO began during a Middle East trip last March when Andersson saw firsthand the Palestinian uprising against Israel's 21-year occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"I met with about 100 boys shot by Israeli soldiers — some of them paralysed for life," Andersson said.

After visiting Israel, the Swedish leader went to Jordan, where talks with two PLO leaders convinced him they wanted a state alongside Israel, not the destruction of the Jewish state always

vowed earlier by Palestinian leaders.

Then began contacts with other diplomats, Egyptians, Saudi Arabians and envoys from several European nations were involved. Andersson said he had talks with Vernon Walters, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and hinted he had contacts with Shultz.

Andersson, 64, tried to play down Sweden's role Thursday. He said his country was only "a postman," delivering messages, but he added: "I confess we have written some of the letters, too."

Eugene Makhlof, the PLO delegate to Stockholm, insisted the Swedes did the bulk of the diplomatic manoeuvring.

"They worked very hard until we achieved this result," he said just after Shultz's announcement.

Andersson explained his steps in the peace process to a small group of reporters early Thursday morning and, later, to a crowded news conference.

He told the news conference he made contact with U.S. Jews and not Israelis because he did not want the Israeli government to know about the effort in advance.

The most crucial event was

the meeting with the Jewish personalities from the United States," he said. "This was with Khalid Al Hassan (of the PLO) a fortnight before Arafat came to Stockholm."

The U.S. Jewish delegation at that secret meeting was led by Rhea Hausser. Al Hassan is a leading figure in the PLO and a longtime colleague of Arafat.

Andersson said that after the meeting he wrote a document expressing the agreements that came out of the session and both sides agreed to sign it.

But it wasn't until Arafat visited Stockholm last week to meet with Hausser and other U.S. Jews that the document was made public.

Andersson's manoeuvring ended Wednesday afternoon with last-minute arguments over which words in English and Arabic would be agreeable to the United States in Arafat's announcement that he accepted Israel's right to exist and renounced terrorism.

The U.S. statement later Wednesday came as a surprise to many. Only a day earlier, U.S. officials said a speech by Arafat did not meet their conditions. Arafat's statement Wednesday at a news conference and his speech Tuesday seemed much the same.

But Andersson said what was different was that the news conference, in English, cleared up questions of language that had

disturbed the United States. He noted that all the ideas in Wednesday's news conference were also in Arafat's speech in Arabic a day earlier, but they were "split up and in different words."

Arabs have a different way of making a speech than Americans, Andersson said.

"They use a lot of words," he said. "A lot of words always cause confusion, misunderstanding... if he (Arafat) changes the words, the Americans say 'what's going on here?'"

One example is that in his speech Arafat said he "condemned" terrorism, while in his news conference he said he "renounced" it.

Makhlof, the PLO diplomat, said that in Arabic one word is used for both concepts.

But Makhlof said it was more than just words that delayed a favourable response from U.S. officials.

"They didn't believe their ears yesterday (Tuesday)," he said. "They needed to hear it again."

Andersson, whose involvement with the Arab-Israeli conflict stretches back 25 years, said he thought the U.S. decision was an important step in breaking the stalemate in the peace process.

"The beginning of peace is always dialogue," he said. "but it has a long way to go."

'We seek a different road'

The following are excerpts from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's address early this month to the U.N. General Assembly Session in New York

THE world in which we live today is radically different from what it was at the beginning or even in the middle of this century. And it continues to change...

TODAY the preservation of any kind of "closed" society is hardly possible... The world economy is becoming a single organism, and no state, whatever its social system or economic status, can normally develop outside it.

THE greatest philosophers sought to grasp the laws of social development and find an answer to the main question: How to make man's life happy, just and safe. The French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian Revolution of 1917 exerted a powerful impact on the very nature of history and radically changed the course of world development... To a large extent, those two revolutions shaped the way of thinking that is still prevalent in social consciousness. But today we face a different world, for which we must seek a different road to the future.

THE formula of development "at the expense of others" is on the way out. In the light of existing realities, no genuine progress is possible at the expense of the rights and freedoms of individuals and nations, or at the expense of nature.

THE use or threat of force no longer can or must be an instrument of foreign policy... All of us, and primarily the stronger of us, must exercise self-restraint and totally rule out any outward-oriented use of force... It is now quite clear that building up military power makes no country omnipotent. What is more, one-sided reliance on military power ultimately weakens other components of national security.

It is also quite clear to us that the principle of freedom of choice is mandatory. Its nonrecognition is fraught with extremely grave consequences for world peace. Denying that right to the peoples under whatever pretext or rhetorical guise means jeopardising even the fragile balance that has been attained. Freedom of choice is a universal principle that should allow for no exceptions... As the world asserts its diversity, attempts to look down on others and to teach them one's own brand of democracy become totally improper, to say nothing of the fact that democratic values intended for export often very quickly lose their worth.

What we are talking about, therefore, is unity in diversity... We are not abandoning our convictions, our philosophy or traditions, nor do we urge anyone to abandon theirs. But neither do we have any intention to be hemmed in by our values. That would result in intellectual impoverishment, for it would mean rejecting a powerful source of development — the exchange of everything original that each nation has independently created.

WE are, of course, far from claiming to be in possession of the ultimate truth.



Handwritten signature: J. P. ...



Trying to explain hunger?

Aid workers say Sudan famine is over — the vulnerable are dead

By Hamza Hendawi
Reuters

KHARTOUM — The 1988 famine in Sudan has ended. The vulnerable are all dead.

Thousands of shallow graves have been taken the places of the sick and dying who only a few months ago haunted the desolate countryside.

"Whoever was vulnerable has died," said Cole Dodge, head of French charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in Sudan, speaking about an MSF-run refugee camp in the south Kordofan town of Al Meiram where nearly 4,000 people died this year.

Relief officials who visited the town of Awel in Bahr Al Ghazal region in late November said nearly 8,000 people died of hunger there between June and September this year.

Foreign relief officials say the government, the army, Arab militias, southern politicians, rebels and, surprisingly, the United Nations and donor countries are high on the list of culprits who contributed to the tragedy.

Collective crime

"It is a collective crime that was made perfect by what amounts to a cover-up in which everyone participated," said the head of a major foreign relief agency in Khartoum.

There is little doubt that five-year-old civil war between government troops and rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the mainly animist and Christian south was a prime cause of the mass loss of life.

Fighting disrupted the subsistence agriculture of the south, whose estimated six million people are mainly cattle herders, forcing more than half of them to flee their homes in search of food and security.

Thousands died in the desperate search for food — from hunger, disease or at the hands of Arab and southern militiamen said to be enjoying tacit government support to keep the SPLA at bay.

Too late

And constant reports speak of militiamen and the mostly-undisciplined SPLA guerrillas systematically looting villages, stealing cattle and abducting women and children.

In December, the International Committee of the Red Cross

(ICRC) finally received the go-ahead from the SPLA and the government to carry out a relief operation for famine victims in areas under the control of both belligerents.

The relief arrived too late for many thousands of people known to be starving and relief officials appear to have consistently failed to report mass deaths in their areas or call for help.

One official said there was no evidence to indicate army transport planes were being used to ferry supplies to the south, and added: "The region has steadily grown to be reminiscent of the south in the 19th century."

"Soldiers of fortune are there to obtain wealth. The army's (C-130) Hercules fly to the south carrying arms and ammunition and return loaded with ivory and ebony."

Defence Minister Abdul Maged Hamed Khalil, however, recently denied in parliament that the army was involved in such acts.

Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi has denied the army was using food as a weapon in the war, saying his government could only be blamed for its failure to provide adequate transport to take food to the south.

His government, meanwhile, has maintained that weather and security problems during the April-October rainy season made it virtually impossible to deliver supplies by road.

Local press reports have accused southern politicians of mismanagement in the distribution of government aid, a charge with which many U.N. and other relief workers in Khartoum agree.

But the capital's overwhelmingly Arabic press has remained largely oblivious to the tragedy in south Sudan, concentrating instead on seemingly endless bickering among political parties.

Relief officials also blame U.N. organisations in Khartoum and donor countries for not having exerted enough pressure on the government to prevent the 1988 tragedy.

"The U.N. in Sudan has shown itself to be a sort of a compromise institution. This is only to be expected since three quarters of its member states are Third World countries with a bad record of human rights," said Mark Duffield, the Sudan representative of the British charity Oxfam.

"The U.N. is an international civil service. The government in Sudan, together with many others, are our masters," said Dodge of UNICEF.

"The only blame the U.N. should take is for not being effective enough," he said.

Children from a different world

By Mariam Shahin
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — They are abandoned, discarded, neglected, sometimes handicapped, and nearly always unwanted children. The Al Hussein Social Institution houses, nourishes and cares for these little abandoned souls, which number anywhere from 120 to 130 at any one time. Al Hussein Social Institution was formed in 1972, through a merger of three separate homes for "orphaned" or abandoned children.

Originally the children were placed in separate "homes" or institutions, according to age and gender. The Al Hussein Institution currently houses boys until the age of six and girls till the age of ten, after which they are housed in other government institutions.

Aims

"Government institutions such as this one are aimed primarily to provide social services to children who have no one to take care of them. Most of our children, however, are not orphans," explains Salwa Nooridin, director of the home. Of the approximately 130 children housed in the institution, more than 100 have at least one acknowledged parent.

The reasons for which the Department of Social Services decide, (in agreement with the families of the children concerned), that the children would receive better care at the institution vary, according to Zahira Hussein, head of the Children Welfare Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs, ranging from mental illness to the imprisonment of parents. The department plays an instrumental role in the placing of the children.

Although the child's susceptibility is limitless in these crucial formative years, the institution's ability to help them cope has its limits. "We aim to give our chil-

dren the best possible care with the means we have," Nooridin says. "Some of the children are here for a short time, others stay here for six or ten years, thus what we can actually achieve in the given time may be limited by factors beyond our control."

Foster home

There is a controversy in the minds of some people as to whether the Al Hussein Social Institution is an orphanage or not; it is not. If anything it may be called a foster home. There is an essential difference between an orphanage and a foster home. By definition an adoption home is an institution from which children can be adopted. Although adoption was once allowed in Jordan, a ruling by the Higher Islamic Court in 1975 interpreted that adoption is not allowed in Islam. Thus adoption is considered illegal in Jordan. To foster is to take care of a child as an adoptive parent would, but the child does not receive the name of this parent nor is he/she entitled to inherit from the foster parent(s).

Homeless children

The children who end up at the Al Hussein Social Institution live there for a variety of different reasons. Some are abandoned. They may be found in the street or at the doors of government institutions, or on the doorsteps of the foster home itself. Social workers at the Ministry of Social Affairs conduct a study of the child's background to ascertain whether the child is orphaned or abandoned, lost or even kidnapped. The ministry follows the recommendations of the study and subsequently places the child in the foster home, if that is the advised action.

"The majority of the children at the home do not fall into this category however. Many of our children come from broken homes, where the remaining parent is not capable of caring for

the child financially, emotionally and sometimes physically," Nooridin points out.

Children whose parents are imprisoned or being treated in mental institutions are also often placed in the home at the recommendation of the social workers.

"Prisons or mental institutions are no place for a child to grow up in. It would be counterproductive for the child and society as a whole if the innocent were to be locked up," Nooridin explains.

Children with mentally handicapped parents may be placed at the home if they can medically verify that because of their illness the parents are not capable of caring for their children and an extended family does not exist or is not willing/capable of caring for the child.

Nooridin points out that many people who get divorced and remarry often want to send their children from their 1st marriage to the home feeling that it is more comfortable to keep them there than have them live with the new step parent. "We get very upset when these things happen because we feel that some people just don't care enough about their children, and that we as an institution are being taken for granted."

"But we are doing everything we can to fight the attitude of it is not convenient for me to raise my children. 'I'll just give them to the foster home to raise'."

Nooridin mentioned however, that these cases are not frequent. When institutionalised parents are released, the ministry reassesses the situation and decides if a child can be returned to the natural parents. "A child is returned to its natural mother provided that she is married, and thus can provide a socially respectable home for her child," Nooridin says.

According to Hussein, "each case is studied on its own merits and each social worker makes his/her independent recommendations according to which the ministry then acts."

When parents come to claim their children after a period of absence they must present a birth certificate, marriage certificate and medical records, in order to verify to the institution that they are physically, mentally and "socially" fit to take care of their children.

Child protection

In an interview with the Jordan Times Hussein of the Ministry of Social Development said that unlike the case in many countries a child may be placed in a foster home as a result of complaints by neighbours or relatives about a child's maltreatment at the hands of parents. Hussein explains that this is "not the case in Jordan, we need to have the agreement of the parents if we want to put their child in the home. Otherwise, as a government institution, we are

not authorised to take children away from their parents whatever the circumstances."

Foster status

Children's awareness about their status as foster children in a society that is as family oriented as Jordan needs special attention, Hussein says.

"The children that grow up in foster homes have to have very strong personalities in order to survive the kind of social discrimination that they will face once they go out into the real world. There is no doubt about that."

Although almost all of the children attend government schools, (unless they are physically or mentally handicapped), they never lead the "normal family" lives that their other classmates do. It is a difficult problem to tackle. "What helps a lot," says Nooridin, is that "there are a few dedicated women who come in once or twice a week to play and communicate with the children. These ladies are loved and the children look forward to their visits because they play with them, cuddle them, and simply give them the affection that any person would give to his/her child; something the staff nannies don't always have the time to do." She points out that "children crave, they actually beg, for affection and if this need is not met, then later on in their adult life they will not be able to give to others what they had never received." She notes that "almost all of these ladies that give their time and affection are non-Arab women residing in Amman."

Male role

What about the role men play in the upbringing of children in the foster home?

"As in most foster homes and orphanages everywhere in the world most if not all employees are women," says Nooridin. "In the case of our institution, all the nannies, nurses and other employees are females. Except for the doctors that come to see the children on a regular basis, the children do not have contact with anyone that could possibly be considered a father figure."

Adulthood

Asked about the social discrimination the children face once they reach adulthood, Hussein notes that "it depends on the strength of the child's personality and ambition. We try to give each child the maximum chance of making it. Depending on his or her interest and academic performance we arrange funding for entry into community colleges and in some cases to the university. Many of our girls get married once they finish school. Some of the girls are hired by the ministry to work to help others, where other boys and girls manage to



Loneliness and need may result in emotionally deprived adults

find jobs on their own after graduating. In each case, however, we act as a family in that we do not throw anyone out on their own without assuring somehow that they can support themselves. If the girls are not married or jobless we make sure that they have proper accommodation and are not forced by their particular circumstances to accommodate themselves in a way that is socially or legally unacceptable.

"We have been very strict on the subject of media exposure of our children. A few years back, an Arabic magazine published the life story of one of our children with pictures of her. One day by coincidence she found and read the article and she was very upset that personal details of her life had become magazine material. She felt that we had betrayed her privacy to an already hostile world," Hussein explains that the media have often accused the ministry of being secretive on the subject, "but it is our duty to protect the children's interests."

Only 10 per cent of the foster homes children can be fostered by families and are subject to certain regulations. These children are officially orphans, that is they have no acknowledged family. They can legally be fostered by a family or by an institution such as the S.O.S. Children's Village. If they are fostered by a family, the ministry scrutinises the potential foster family carefully, according to Zahira Hussein.

"A special social service unit researches into the background of the family to gather all the facts about fostering couple. They must be married, certify that they cannot have natural children of their own, be members of the Muslim faith, he in a child rearing age, must not be afflicted with any serious diseases and must be financially capable of giving the child an adequate upbringing."

But what is an adequate upbringing? Almost everybody agrees that a foster home is certainly better than growing up on the streets, as millions of children in cities such as Bombay or Rio de Janeiro do. However, the fact remains that no society can afford to relax and take for granted that things are being taken care of. "Society's obligation to itself never ends," says a volunteer who visits the foster home frequently.



All children have the right to the basics

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Soviet Union to devalue rouble by 50%, loosen controls on investments

MOSCOW (AP) — The Soviet government has decided to devalue the rouble by 50 per cent on some trade deals in 1990, and to allow Western capitalist companies to operate almost independently on Soviet soil, Soviet media have reported.

The rouble appears to be set for a slide from \$1.60 to 80 cents, dramatically cutting the price of Soviet goods to foreign buyers. It is the first concrete step toward reducing the rouble's extreme over-valuation under Soviet-set exchange rates. The black market rate for the rouble is 20 to 25 cents.

"A lot of people have become very excited," said a Western diplomat who declined to be named. But he warned that the communist nation reportedly has 3,000 different exchange rates, depending on the product and the partner, and the Soviets have not said which will experience the full 50 per cent drop.

The devaluation will affect only foreign trade, not tourists and Soviet citizens, he said.

The changes are designed to encourage foreign firms to build factories that will ease the Soviet Union's extreme shortage of consumer goods and medical supplies, according to a policy statement from the Council of Ministers published in several economic journals in the past few days.

A spokesman for the Council of Ministers declined to clarify the statement, but promised a news conference with Deputy Premier Vladimir Kamenshev at a

who asked not to be identified. "One of the reasons they've been cool toward the joint venture law is they'd like to operate their own wholly-owned subsidiaries in the Soviet Union," he said.

"It's a psychological barrier," said a Western diplomat "because you can have what you want and the managing director can be foreign."

In addition, the joint venture will be allowed to pay for housing and other services for its foreign employees out of its rouble earnings, rather than be forced to spend additional hard currency, he said.

The policy statement also promised that firms manufacturing consumer goods and medical products in the Soviet Union would be allowed to take part of their profits home. Companies building operations in the sparsely populated Soviet far east would get three years of tax-free operations.

However, several businessmen said the changes don't eliminate the greatest obstacles to Western firms. "You've got to be able to repatriate profits and guarantee a supply of materials locally," noted John Burgess of Midland Bank Plc.

But the U.S. businessman said Western interest in the Soviet market is being driven more by "the type of perestroika and the Gorbachev persona" than by government policy.

U.S. Congressional agency urges broad thrifts reforms

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Broad reform of the deposit insurance system should be included in any multibillion-dollar rescue package for bankrupt savings and loan institutions, a congressional watchdog agency has said.

The General Accounting Office said in a report prepared for a congressional committee that to handle thrift failures over the next 10 years, the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp (FSLIC) likely needs \$85 billion more than it is currently scheduled to receive.

FSLIC insures customer deposits in savings and loans, collecting its revenues from insurance premiums it charges the institutions.

But FSLIC is now bankrupt itself, ending 1987 with a deficit of \$14 billion, at a time when hundreds of insolvent thrifts must be sold or closed out.

At the end of 1987, more than 500 thrifts already were insolvent and insured deposit-taking institutions of all types were going

bankrupt at rates that were exceeded only during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the General Accounting Office (GAO) said.

The GAO report recommends separating FSLIC from the regulatory agency for the savings and loan industry, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, to give it more authority to deal with problem thrifts.

The congressional agency says FSLIC should be reorganized and given new capital to permit it to operate on its own. It does not favour merging FSLIC with the healthy fund that insures commercial bank deposits, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC), as some members of Congress have urged.

The GAO says about 1,000 thrifts that are troubled but not yet insolvent should be left with the restructured FSLIC, but an estimated 1,000 healthy thrifts should be permitted to convert to FDIC's insurance fund and pay fees like those levied on commercial banks.

A government report revealed last week that the number of insolvent savings and loan associations fell further from July through September, but the improvement was partially offset by the 22 thrift institutions that slipped into insolvency.

The savings and loans industry is piling up the biggest loss this year since the depression of the 1930s. Losses in the third quarter were \$1.6 billion, down from \$3.9 billion in both the first and second quarters.

The Federal Home Loan Bank Board said the number of insolvent institutions fell from 498 as of June 30 to 434 as of Sept. 30. At the end of last year, there were 520 insolvents.

However, even as the government resolved or stabilised the cases of 86 thrifts, 22 more slipped into insolvency.

James Barth, chief economist of the bank board, declined to say whether he thought the institution performance would improve or worsen in the fourth quarter.

Study shows increasing challenge from state companies to oil giants

LONDON (R) — Big Western companies still dominate the sale and refining of oil despite moves by Third World and Gulf states to control the way their prime resource is handled, an independent study has said.

A survey of the world's top 50 oil companies by the New York-based oil journal Petroleum Intelligence Weekly (PIW) said Mexico, Brazil and OPEC producers Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Kuwait were making headway in the refining or "downstream" sector controlled by oil majors for most of the century.

But the six remaining "seven sister" multinationals which ran the oil world until OPEC began to dictate prices and output in the

1970's — Royal/Dutch Shell, Exxon, Texaco, British Petroleum, Mobil and Chevron — still lead in downstream.

The seven became six after Chevron acquired Gulf. "Refining and marketing still remain dominated by the large international majors," PIW said. "Shell, alone, sells one of every 10 barrels of products in the non-communist world."

The 50 firms account for more than 80 per cent of oil output outside the East Bloc and hold 90 per cent of crude oil and natural gas liquids reserves outside the East Bloc, PIW said.

The survey, PIW's first in what it plans to be an annual series, tracks six key factors — oil and

gas output, oil and gas reserves, refining capacity and petroleum product sales.

In a cumulative rating equally weighing all six areas, Aramco, the state oil firm of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries' biggest producer Saudi Arabia, ranks first.

Shell ranks second, followed by Exxon, the state Petroleos de Venezuela, the state National Iranian Oil Co, Chevron, Texaco, Mobil, Pertamina of Indonesia and British Petroleum.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

Garuda, Saudia sign air service accord

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesian flag carrier Garuda Indonesia Airways and the Saudia Airlines have signed an agreement on air service between the two countries. Under the agreement, each airline would add one scheduled flight a week between Jakarta and Jeddah, with further increases possible, said Sobirin Misbach, director-general for air communication. He signed along with Sbeikh Nassir Al Assad, director for the Saudi Civil Aviation Agency. At present, Garuda and Saudia serve the Jakarta-Jeddah route three times a week with Boeing 747 jetliners.

Report urges help to jobless women

BRUSSELS (R) — A European Community (EC) report has accused member states of not doing enough to help unemployed women find jobs and singled out Britain, Spain, Ireland and Belgium for particular criticism. It said although female unemployment was growing faster than male, EC states should be providing more counselling and information about how to find jobs as well as increasing the length of maternity leave. The report said it was hard to estimate how many jobless women there were in the EC because many were not registered for unemployment benefit.

Swiss National Bank raises rates

ZURICH (AP) — The Swiss National Bank announced Friday it is raising its key lending rates by a one-half percentage point effective Dec. 19, in a new display of its tight monetary policy. The discount rate was increased to 3½ per cent and the Lombard rate to 5½ per cent. Both rates had last been boosted Aug. 25. The new increase came one day after the West German Bundesbank raised its Lombard rate from 5.0 to 5.5 per cent. In a statement, the bank said the new action took into account the "current situation on the money market and is in compliance with the Swiss National Bank's policy as implied in the money supply target for 1989." The target in money stock expansion is two per cent. Swiss National Bank President Markus Lusser said last June that this should allow the Swiss economy to grow around two per cent without any risk of inflation.

Britain's inflation rate stays at 6.4%

LONDON (AP) — Britain's annual inflation rate held steady at 6.4 per cent in November, the government has said in a report that somewhat eased concerns about resurgent inflation. However, retail prices rose 0.5 per cent in November from the previous month, the Department of Employment said. "There can be no grounds for complacency," Employment Secretary Norman Fowler said. Fighting inflation "remains a clear priority." The government has pushed up interest rates to 13 per cent from a decade-low of 7.5 per cent in June to discourage consumer spending and choke off inflation, which has increased from a 3.3 per cent annual rate in January. In October, the retail price index rose one per cent from the previous month and was up 6.4 per cent from a year earlier. Market expectations had been for an annual inflation rate of between 6.3 per cent and 6.5 per cent, in November.

Jakarta allows rupiah to continue slide

JAKARTA (AP) — The Indonesian central bank Friday set the rate of the nation's currency, the rupiah, at 1,728 to one U.S. dollar, down from 1,726 rupiahs Thursday. Monetary authorities have been allowing the rupiah to decline against the dollar since the beginning of this year to help maintain the competitiveness of Indonesia's non-oil exports. A lower rupiah tends to make Indonesian products less expensive. By the end of July the currency had dropped to 1,693 rupiahs per dollar from its 1987 level of 1,650. It fell to 1,718 per dollar by the end of November, to 1,720 Dec. 3 and 1,726 Dec. 14. In September 1988, the government devalued the currency by 45 per cent from 1,134 to 1,644 rupiahs to the dollar, but last year allowed it to rise to 1,650.

Nigeria Airways sacks 3,000 workers

LAGOS (AP) — The administrator of Nigeria Airways has dismissed 3,000 workers, a third of the work force. In a bid to keep the bankrupt airline operating, the airline had earlier sharply reduced its overseas flights after accidents grounded some aircraft and two others were seized for non-payment of debts. It has been denied over-flight rights by some countries for refusing to pay its bills. The airline reportedly owes more than \$1 billion to creditors. International flight attendants were replaced with attendants from domestic flights after several attendants and flight crew members were arrested on drug charges in the United States, Europe and Britain. Some senior officials were among those dismissed, including the director of engineering and maintenance. In addition to management problems, the airline suffered through years of over-valuation of the Nigerian naira and its fares, set by the government, were often below cost.

Norway continues record oil output

OSLO (R) — Norway, Western Europe's biggest oil producer after Britain, last month continued to pump crude at a record rate from its North Sea fields, petroleum companies operating here have said. Output equaled the previous record average, set in October, of 1.22 million barrels oil a day, according to a Reuters survey. Operators said production would not exceed Norway's voluntary 7.5 per cent cutback in planned production growth. Norway, which is not a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has enforced the cutback since February, 1987, in support of the producer group's efforts to stabilise world oil prices. Norway recently renewed the curbs through the first half of 1989.

Citibank Bahrain promotes two

BAHRAIN — Mr. Mohammad Al Shrooqi, vice president and general manager of Citibank Bahrain Branch, has announced that Mr. Zaher Hammouda, vice president and director of Citicorp global payment products, for the

Middle East, Africa and Levant, has been promoted to regional director for South Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Mr. Hammouda left Bahrain in November 1988 to assume his new responsibilities and will be based in Singapore. Mr. Hani Al Maskati, who is currently the business development director for the Middle East, has been promoted to director of Citicorp global payments products Middle East, Africa and Levant's business and will continue to be based in Bahrain. Mr. Al Maskati has held several management positions at Citicorp/Citibank during the last few years. Both Mr. Hammouda and Mr. Al Maskati are Bahraini nationals and have been with Citicorp/Citibank for a number of years.

Britain gives Kuwait 3 years to cut B.P. stake

LONDON (R) — Britain said Friday it was giving Kuwait three years to divest more than half of its 21.6 per cent stake in British Petroleum (B.P.) Co Plc, Britain's biggest company.

Trade and industry secretary Lord Young, who told the Kuwait Investment Office in October it had one year to cut its B.P. stake to 9.9 per cent, said he was extending that period to three years. Kuwait had asked for a five-year time limit.

The Kuwait Investment Office, the London-based overseas investment arm of the Kuwaiti finance ministry, built up its stake after a huge £7.2 billion (\$13 billion) public issue of new B.P. shares flopped last year in the wake of the October stock market crash. Most of the issue represented the British government's remaining stake in B.P.

The cut in Kuwait's B.P. holding was ordered after Britain's watchdog Monopolies and Mergers Commission judged it could lead to a conflict of interests. Kuwait is a major oil producer and a member of OPEC, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

A B.P. spokesman declined to comment on a market rumour

that the oil and gas group might use the proceeds from a possible sale of its minerals division to RTZ Corp Plc to buy back some of the Kuwaiti shares.

B.P. said Wednesday it was holding talks with RTZ over the purchase of B.P.'s minerals business, which industry sources said could be worth some \$3.5 billion.

Arab foreign debt sucks 20% of oil export income

KUWAIT (OPECNA) — More than 20 per cent of Arab oil export earnings are now being channelled towards debt servicing, according to an editorial in the "Bulletin" monthly, published by the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The publication estimated the external debt of 12 Arab states at more than \$80 billion, excluding

private debts not officially guaranteed and those not declared.

Arab oil revenues, says the editorial, have declined sharply to \$60 billion, no more than one-fourth of the figure recorded at the beginning of the decade.

The "Bulletin" points out that major Arab oil countries are now turning to domestic markets to finance their budget deficits.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Saturday Dec. 17, 1988
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	French franc	Japanese yen (for 100)	78.3	78.7
U.S. dollar	472.0	474.0	Dutch guilder	300.5	301.4	
Pound Sterling	838.7	863.0	Swedish crown	237.8	239.0	
Deutsche mark	268.5	269.8	Italian lira (for 100)	77.5	77.9	
Swiss franc	318.5	320.1	Belgian franc (for 10)	36.4	36.6	
				127.9	128.5	

Weekly Amman Financial Market trading

AMMAN (J.T.) — The following table summarises trading activities at the Amman Financial Market during the week starting Saturday, Dec. 10, '88 and ending Wednesday Dec. 14, '88. (Figures in Jordanian dinars).

Name of company	Number of shares	Volume of trade	Opening price	Closing price	Par value
Banking and financial institutions					
Industrial Development Bank	7725	12592	1.630	1.630	1,000
Petra Bank	2000	4660	2.330	2.330	1,000
Jordan Islamic Bank	1430	2676	1.870	1.870	1,000
Jordan Kuwait Bank	2405	3680	1.520	1.530	1,000
Jordan Gulf Bank	—	—	—	—	1,000
Housing Bank	3536	6738	1.910	1.900	1,000
Arab Jordan Investment Bank	5650	13995	2.450	2.500	1,000
Cairo Amman Bank	—	—	—	—	5,000
Bank of Jordan	762	12135	15.900	15.700	5,000
Arab Bank	3450	468043	135.250	133.250	10,000
Jordan National Bank	8125	22103	2.730	2.720	1,000
Jordan Finance House for Development	2130	2659	1.250	1.240	1,000
Jordan Investment and Finance Corporation	25520	55092	2.410	2.390	1,000
Finance and Credit Corporation	19400	10868	0.570	0.550	1,000
National Financial Investments	—	—	—	—	1,000
National Portfolio Securities	10447	8651	0.840	0.820	1,000
Arab Finance Corporation (Jordan)	7020	17068	2.400	2.410	1,000
Jordan Securities Corporation	8121	6989	0.870	0.860	1,000
Real Estate Financing Corporation	—	—	—	—	2,000
Al Mashrek Exchange	—	—	—	—	10,000
Insurance and reinsurance					
Jordan French Insurance	2450	13293	5.550	5.350	1,000
REFCO Life Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Arab Life and Accident Insurance	1278	1322	1.010	1.030	1,000
Yarmouk Insurance and Reinsurance	2450	3434	1.320	1.390	1,000
Holy Land Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Philadelphia Insurance	2150	2445	1.100	1.140	1,000
Arab Union International Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jerusalem Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan-Gulf Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
General Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Eagle Insurance	—	—	—	—	10,000
Middle East Insurance	—	—	—	—	10,000
National Ahliah Insurance	3250	4283	1.310	1.310	1,000
Arab Belgian Insurance and Reinsurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
United Insurance	6373	7635	1.150	1.210	1,000
Universal Insurance	27375	19554	0.760	0.690	1,000
Services and industries					
General Investments	1158	1787	1.530	1.500	1,000
Imna for Investment and Financial Facilities	2000	1320	0.650	0.660	1,000
Darco for Housing and Investment	341742	234781	0.700	0.670	1,000
Real Estate Investment (Aqaro)	26900	14101	0.530	0.510	1,000
Jordan Gulf Real Estate Investment	5500	1730	0.330	0.310	1,000
Jordan Leasing Corporation	117	64	0.530	0.560	1,000
Petra Enterprises and Leasing Equipments	136548	25662	0.690	0.680	1,000
Equipment Leasing & Maintenance/Tajero	2000	560	0.790	0.780	1,000
International Contracting & Investment	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordanian Electric Power	3427	5989	1.750	1.750	1,000
Irbid District Electricity	2125	2125	1.010	1.000	1,000
Arab International Hotels	—	—	—	—	1,000
Hotels and Tourism	—	—	—	—	1,000
Garage Owners Federation Office	100	473	4.500	4.730	1,000
Jordan National Shipping Lines	23103	22435	0.970	0.970	1,000
Jordan Press Foundation	560	1644	2.900	2.910	1,000
Jordan Press and Publishing	3030	5819	1.900	1.950	1,000
Dar Al Shaab Press, Printing and Publishing	33559	19763	0.620	0.560	1,000
Jordan Dairy	34624	35415	1.050	1.010	1,000
Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing	16280	38746	2.390	2.380	1,000
Intermediate Petrochemical Industries	22086	28672	1.360	1.340	1,000
Jordan Phosphate Mines	14785	56462	3.820	3.800	1,000
Aladdin Industries	13450	18314	1.370	1.350	1,000
Arab Aluminium Manufacturing	102174	213809	2.090	2.060	1,000
Jordan Worsted Mills	1012	5060	5.000	5.000	1,000
Jordan Ceramics	12566	20332	1.600	1.620	1,000
Chemical Industries	61789	132645	2.130	2.140	1,000
Jordan Industries and Match (JIMCO)	58850	37844	0.710	0.640	1,000
Dar Al Dawa' for Development and Investment	3100	6805	2.210	2.170	1,000
National Steel Industries	67400	196852	2.930	2.920	1,000
Universal Chemical Industries	69752	152708	2.050	2.180	5,000
General Mining	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Petroleum Refinery	4734	40736	8.700	8.580	1,000
Jordan Lime & Brick	146350	29491	0.210	0.200	1,000
National Industries	—	—	—	—	1,000
Arab Paper Converting and Trading	7298	2478	0.360	0.330	1,000
Jordan Wooden Industries (JWICO)	9764	14627	1.570	1.480	1,000
Livestock and Poultry	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Pipes Manufacturing	19767	29431	1.490	1.480	1,000
Rafia Industrial for Plastic Bags	1150	989	0.820	0.860	1,000
Jordan Paper and Cardboard	30	180	3.600	3.600	1,000
Jordan Rockwood Industries	7150	5998	0.850	0.810	1,000
Trans-Jordan Minerals Research	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Himeh Mineral	—	—	—	—	1,000
Orient Dry Batteries Factory	—	—	—	—	1,000
Woolen Industries	3200	2784	0.860	0.870	1,000
Jordan Tanning	375	788	2.100	2.100	5,000
Jordan Printing and Packaging	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette	78	1421	17.250	18.500	1,000
Mas Industries	—	—	—	—	1,000
Arab Center for Pharmaceuticals & Chemicals	—	—	—	—	1,000
National Cable & Wire Manufacturing	17700	18523	1.070	1.040	1,000
Jordan Spinning & Weaving	49116	47690	0.970	0.960	1,000
Jordan Sulpho Chemicals	34875	101433	2.890	2.890	1,000
Jordan Cement Factories	53943	69492	1.280	1.280	1,000
Jordan Glass Industries	11050	11158	1.020	1.010	1,000

Sofia meeting first after Gorbachev decision

Warsaw Pact discusses pullout

SOFIA (R) — Warsaw Pact defence ministers gathered in Sofia Saturday for their first joint meeting since Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev announced sweeping cuts in troops and equipment in Eastern Europe.

The official Bulgarian news agency BTA said the ministers of the seven-member communist defence alliance had arrived in Sofia for the meeting chaired by Commander-in-Chief Viktor Kulikov of the Soviet Union.

It is their first meeting since Gorbachev made his dramatic announcement Dec. 8 that total Soviet forces would be cut by 500,000 in two years, and that six tank divisions and 50,000 men would be withdrawn from East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Soviet Arms Control Chief and Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Karpov told a Moscow news briefing Thursday that the tanks withdrawn would include both old and new models.

His statement was seen as a response to fears expressed by

some North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) officials that the effect of the move could be diminished if it involved only old equipment.

Karpov also said troops remaining in the three countries would be reorganised into purely defensive units.

Although Moscow's allies have publicly supported the Soviet move, diplomats in the region said some East Bloc military leaders might have reservations.

Soviet armed forces Chief of Staff Sergei Akhromyev, a World War II veteran who rose during the Stalin era in which massive military strength was emphasised, stepped down from the post earlier this month, officially for health reasons.

Karpov denied reports that Akhromyev, 65, had resigned

because of disagreement over the Gorbachev initiative. He was replaced by 49-year-old Colonel-General Mikhail Moiseyev.

The deputy minister declined to comment on reports that Soviet Defence Minister General Dmitry Yazov, 65, might also soon step down and be replaced by a civilian. Yazov was reported to have arrived in Sofia for the current meeting.

Diplomats in the region said there might be some concern over the extent of the Soviet cuts among senior officers in the Warsaw Pact forces, most of whom are also war veterans likely to have been influenced by Stalin's policies.

In Czechoslovakia, Communist Party leader Milos Jakes went out of his way recently to dispel any suggestions that the 80,000 Soviet troops stationed in the country since the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, which crushed the "Prague spring" reform and installed the regime he now leads, were there for domestic reasons.

Palme suspect to go on ID parade

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The widow of Prime Minister Olof Palme has agreed to try to identify a 41-year-old Swede being held in the investigation of her husband's fatal shooting, Expressen newspaper reported Saturday.

Christer Pettersson, who was arrested Wednesday, pleaded innocent Friday in a preliminary hearing. But a judge ruled there were reasonable grounds to suspect he killed Palme and ordered him held for further investigation.

Palme, the dominant figure in Swedish politics for more than a decade, was shot at close

range and killed Feb. 28, 1986, while walking home unguarded from a downtown movie theatre with his wife Lisbet, who was grazed by a bullet.

However, it was not certain she would be summoned to make an identification, according to the report.

"We would like to spare her as long as possible," Expressen quoted a source close to the investigation as saying. "If we can do without her testimony we will try to do that."

Prosecutor Jorgen Ahlblad complained, meanwhile, about publication of Pettersson's picture in foreign newspapers,

saying that would complicate the case.

"If a witness says he has seen the photograph of a suspect in the paper, the value of the evidence will be rather low at a confrontation," Ahlblad said on Swedish radio.

Several witnesses have picked out Pettersson as the man seen standing outside the movie theatre before Palme and his wife emerged, press reports said Saturday.

Nothing has surfaced, however, to indicate that he was actually the gunman.

The killer followed the couple down the street for several

blocks before the shooting, then escaped down a dark alley.

Sweden's press and libel regulations prohibit publication in this country of the names and pictures of suspects in criminal cases, in some instances even after a person has been convicted.

However, personal information about Swedes is easily available from various national offices. Since his arrest, Pettersson's name has been a matter of public record, and anyone can obtain a picture of him for a three-kronor (\$0.50) fee at the central passport office.

Old Curiosity Shop up for sale

LONDON (AP) — The old curiosity shop, reputed to be the oldest shop in London and the home of Charles Dickens' child heroine Little Nell, is being offered for sale, agents said Thursday.

The picturesque house at 13 Portsmouth Street in Holborn, central London, was built in about 1567 during the reign of Elizabeth I. The house became a curiosity shop in the 1780s and is thought to have provided the inspiration for Dickens' 1840 novel, "The Old Curiosity Shop." Today, the shop sells gifts, antiques and mementos and attracts more than 400,000 visitors a year, said real estate agents Knight, Frank and Rutley.

Noise finally pays off

TOKYO (AP) — Twelve years after filing suit, 319 residents of a southern Japanese city were awarded 197 million yen (\$1.59 million) Friday for suffering caused by noise from night flights at a local airport.

Some 507 residents of Fukuoka City, 899 kilometres southwest of Tokyo, filed civil suits in 1976 and 1981 against the government, asking the court to ban night flights at the airport due to noise which they said violated legally permissible levels. The plaintiffs complained of stomach ulcers, sleeplessness, hearing difficulties and disturbances to television and radio reception from nighttime flights by military and civilian jets at the airport, said court spokesman Yuichi Shiona.

Christmas not so merry for Santas

SYDNEY (R) — A hureaucratic scrooge has panned some Australian Santas who feel their "ho, ho, ho" routine deserves to be treated as part. Representatives of Santas in New South Wales told the state's pay arbitration commission they deserved actors' rates of 74 dollars (\$60) for a three-hour stint in the sleigh. At present, many are paid shop assistants' wages of 22.50 dollars (\$18) for sitting in midsummer heat while toddlers pull their thick white beards.

Stealth cost revealed

WASHINGTON (R) — The air force said Friday that each of its planned 132 Stealth bombers, designed to be invisible to enemy radar, is expected to cost \$515.9 million.

"The Soviets know what the plane can do. Whatever it costs is worth it," Air Force Secretary Edward Aldridge told reporters in estimating the total cost of the programme at \$68.1 billion after inflation is taken into account.

The first flying-wing design aircraft built by Northrop Corporation will become operational in mid-1991 at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, and the last will probably be delivered in mid-1995, Aldridge said.

The first B-2 was briefly rolled out of a hangar at Northrop's California plant last month and is expected to make its first flight to Edwards Air Force Base in California within the next two months to begin flight tests.

The aircraft has no tail or fuselage like current planes. It is designed with sharp edges and made of composite materials which will not reflect an identifiable object to enemy radar operators.

Despite Friday's air force estimate, some critics of the programme have estimated that the planes could actually cost more than \$750 million each and say that it could not find Soviet mobile missiles effectively.

The air force said that the cost of the programme in 1981 dollars would be \$42.3 billion, 16 per cent more than the original estimate of \$36.6 billion. But those figures do not take inflation into account.

It estimated the cost in "then year" (inflated) dollars at \$68.1 billion.

Despite criticism of the high cost of the aircraft in the face of expected defence budget problems, Aldridge said it is needed. Other B-2 supporters, including Senate Armed Forces Committee Chairman Sam Nunn of Georgia, has said it will make the costly Soviet air defence system obsolete.

Critics of the Stealth programme have warned that the Pentagon should move very slowly on developing the B-2 because of electronic and other problems experienced in the U.S. B-1 strategic bomber, which is now deployed.



John Tower

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect George Bush said Friday his appointment of John Tower as defence secretary should reassure the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and other allies because of the former senator's strong pro-defence record.

"I certainly regard no duty of the president as more important than maintaining a strong nation-

Tower appointment to reassure NATO

al defence," Bush told reporters. "If we've proven anything in the last eight years, it is that peace through strength works."

Tower, he said, "has established great credibility and earned great respect both in Congress and among the American people for his knowledge... and for his understanding of the fundamental truth that strength and clarity in our defence and national security policy lead to peace."

"It is essential that America remain strong, that we maintain the ability to defend our country, defend our vital interests abroad, maintain the confidence of our allies, and the respect of our potential adversaries," Tower said.

As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Tower was Congress' greatest ally

of President Ronald Reagan's military buildup in the early 1980s.

Bush said "the many significant foreign policy accomplishments" of the Reagan administration "would not have been possible but for the re-establishment of our national strength which President Reagan inaugurated eight years ago."

He acknowledged challenges in the defence policy, referring to the constraints on spending caused by attempts to reduce U.S. government deficits without raising taxes.

"We do have a great challenge ahead of us," Tower said. "... we must provide at least as much, if not more, defence for less money. And to meet that challenge, we must do several things."

Colombo extends emergency laws

COLOMBO (AP) — Sinhalese extremists have killed more than 425 people in the last month in an attempt to disrupt Monday's presidential election, officials said Saturday, as the government extended emergency laws.

Cabinet Minister Vincent Perera said 405 people were killed by militants from Nov. 16 to Dec. 14 in Sinhalese-dominated central and southern Sri Lanka.

At least 23 people were killed Thursday and Friday, police and military officials said.

The minister spoke in parliament before the 168-member house voted 65-2 to extend indefinitely emergency laws in effect since 1983. The laws give the government broad powers to detain people suspected of arson,

violence and instigating strikes.

The latest victims included three policemen killed Friday when suspected Sinhalese extremists attacked police patrols in central Sri Lanka, said the military officials, who cannot be identified under briefing rules.

The killings are part of a campaign of violence aimed at disrupting the presidential polls. The People's Liberation Front, the main militant Sinhalese group, has called for a boycott of the voting, claiming they will not be conducted fairly.

The group has called for the dismissal of the government and organised a series of crippling strikes in the Sinhalese heartland. It says the government gave too many concessions in a July 1987

peace accord aimed at ending a five-year-old insurrection by guerrillas from the minority Tamil community.

Members of the front have been blamed for bomb attacks on meetings of opposition presidential candidates Srimavo Bandaranaike and Ossie Abeygunasekara.

Two bombs exploded at a public meeting Friday addressed by Bandaranaike, a former prime minister and leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. She was unhurt.

Abeygunasekara, who represents the United Socialist Alliance, which is composed of four leftist parties, has survived three assassination attempts since he announced his candidacy.



Central American wars rage despite many mediation efforts

MANAGUA (R) — Central American presidents promised to end the region's guerrilla wars in 1988, but except in Nicaragua, where U.S.-backed rebels have run out of money, the conflicts seem likely to grind on for years.

Guerrillas in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua say governments in their countries have not tried to eradicate the social injustices that sparked off wars in which 100,000 people have died.

Washington has also faced a series of setbacks in 1988, with governments in Nicaragua and Panama set to oust President Reagan despite his efforts to force them from power.

President-elect George Bush will have to contend with U.S. allies in Central America who appear more wary of U.S. policies.

Costa Rica President Oscar Arias won the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize for creating a regional peace plan, which Central American leaders agreed to implement after a summit in San Jose in

January. But the plan, calling for democratic reforms and an end to foreign support of insurgents, has stagnated. None of the presidents are now talking of Central American peace in 1989.

A new summit will be held in El Salvador in January but Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte said: "We shouldn't expect spectacular results."

Leftist guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala have continued fighting this year, saying the United States is propping up weak civilian governments while turning a blind eye to military-run death squads.

In Guatemala, President Vinicio Cerezo faced an attempted coup in May, when loyalist troops choked a rebellion by soldiers at two bases outside the capital.

Only the conflict in Nicaragua has subsided in 1988, even though the Reagan administration and the right-wing contras say the Sandinistas still want to impose a Marxist dictatorship.

Billboards in Managua read: "Reagan is going, the revolution remains."

The U.S. Congress cut off military aid to the rebels in February and most of the demoralised contra army is now camped in eastern Honduras.

In March, the contras and the Sandinistas signed a truce which set out a mechanism for ending the war. The rebels broke off peace talks in June, accusing the Sandinistas of intransigence. An uneasy ceasefire is still in place.

Panamanian leader General Manuel Antonio Noriega has survived attempts by Washington to oust him.

The military-dominated legislative assembly sacked President Eric Arturo Delvalle in February, hours after he tried to topple Noriega as head of the 16,000-strong armed forces.

Washington still recognises Delvalle and has imposed economic sanctions aimed at forcing Noriega to resign and allow democratic reforms.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Aung Gyi's party to run in elections

RANGOON (AP) — Burma's election commission announced the registration of retired Brigadier Aung Gyi's Union National Democracy Party as the 16th political party registered to take part in promised general elections, the working people daily reported Saturday. In the new party registered Friday at the election commission, Brigadier Aung Gyi is the patron and former Trade and Industry Minister Kyaw Myint is the chairman, the paper said. Aung Gyi is a former chairman of the most popular party — the National League for Democracy — but was expelled by the league's ruling bodies Dec. 3 this year.

Soviets conduct nuclear test

MOSCOW (AP) — The Soviet Union conducted an underground nuclear test Saturday at government grounds near Semipalatinsk in Central Asia, the official news agency TASS said. It said the 7:18 a.m. (03:18 GMT) test had a yield of 20 to 150 kilotons and was conducted "with a view to upgrading military technology." TASS added, "the radiation situation in the testing area and beyond the test site is normal." No other details were provided.

Students stage anti-Roh protests

SEOUL (AP) — Student radicals and dissidents Saturday attacked a government party office and staged anti-government street demonstrations demanding the arrest of former President Chun Doo-hwan. News reports said about a dozen students briefly occupied an office of President Roh Tae-woo's governing Democratic Justice Party in the southern city of Chonju early Saturday. "Arrest Chun Doo-hwan," the students shouted as they attacked the office, breaking windows with rocks and steel pipes, according to the reports. Police, firing teargas, retook the building in 20 minutes and arrested six students, while the other demonstrators fled, the reports said. In southern Seoul, about 1,200 students and dissidents held an outdoor rally, denouncing Roh for blocking public efforts to divulge details of misdeeds involving Chun.

Walesa pays homage to slain

GDANSK, Poland (AP) — Solidarity Chairman Lech Walesa led 3,000 people paying homage to Baltic seacoast workers slain in 1970 riots and said he can see signs of a new "chance for Poland." "Something is becoming visible in this country. I don't know what it is. Maybe we will fail once more... but when there is a chance, even a minimal chance (we) must undertake it. Because it is a

chance for Poland, for all of us, and especially for youth," the leader of hanned labour federation told the crowd at the Lenin Shipyard. Walesa seemed to be referring to the government's growing tolerance for Solidarity. Such moderation has been expressed with increased, non-critical coverage of him in the official media and recent government overtures to begin a dialogue. "Today, as you can see there are signs of a chance," Walesa said. "Will anything come of it? Although I'm not naive, I deeply believe it will."

27 workers rescued after rig collapse

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia (R) — Twenty-seven people who spent the night in a lifeboat rocked by 12-metre waves after fleeing from a stricken oil rig were rescued Friday. The people were all workers on the rig which capsized 870 kilometres southeast of Halifax Thursday. "They are all safe and do not require medical attention," search and rescue spokesman Dick Pepper said, but added that some of the rescued were tired and seasick after their ordeal.

Polio could be eradicated by 1990

BALTIMORE (AP) — The number of active polio cases in the Western Hemisphere has dropped from thousands in Latin America alone in the 1970s to around 300 so far this year, giving hope the disease can be eliminated in the region by 1990. Ciro de Quadros, a Brazilian epidemiologist, told a group at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health Thursday that the public health strides against the disease compare only to those against smallpox.

James Brown sentenced

AIKEN, South Carolina (R) — Singer James Brown, the self-styled "godfather of soul," was in jail Friday as his lawyers worked on an appeal against a six-year sentence for assaulting police after a high-speed car chase. Brown, one of the biggest-selling singers in popular music, was sentenced Thursday after a jury found him guilty of two counts of aggravated assault and failing to stop for police in the incident last September. The prosecution said Brown failed to pull over in his pickup truck when asked to stop by police who had received a tip he was carrying a gun and was acting dangerously. Cornered in a car park, he tried to reverse into officers, hitting two. He was finally stopped when officers shot out his tyres. The singer, whose hits in the 60s included "Please, Please, Please," "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag," "I Got You," "Sex Machine," and "It's a Man's World," is enjoying a comeback in the pop charts.

THE Sunday Crossword

Edited by Herb Etkerson

NO TURNS
By I. Miller

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|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN | ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 TAE name | 1 Pool | 1 Places | 1 Fr. composer |
| 2 Step slope | 2 Ripe nettle | 2 Gather | 2 Name god of war |
| 3 Active miles | 3 Active miles | 3 City on the | 3 English |
| 4 Coriander with | 4 Coriander with | 4 Ruff | 4 Transitory |
| 5 Difficulties | 5 Difficulties | 5 Ladyship | 5 Carver base |
| 6 Fairly late | 6 Fairly late | 6 One not | 6 Kind of word? |
| 7 Main speeches | 7 Main speeches | 7 Sidewalked | 7 Stock market |
| 8 Direct | 8 Direct | 8 More | 8 Oversee: abbr. |
| 9 More gaily | 9 More gaily | 9 Actor Johnson | 9 Shove |
| 10 Nightingale | 10 Nightingale | 10 Part | 10 Shown |
| 11 Planning | 11 Planning | 11 Navy vessel | 11 Shown |
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| 17 Lits | 17 Lits | | |
| 18 Closed shop | 18 Closed shop | | |
| 19 group | 19 group | | |
| 20 Speed measure | 20 Speed measure | | |
| 21 short | 21 short | | |
| 22 Table scrap | 22 Table scrap | | |
| 23 Mind one's | 23 Mind one's | | |
| 24 Kind of room | 24 Kind of room | | |
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